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Scandinavian Studies

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HOW OLD ARE THE MYTHOLOGICAL EDDIC POEMS?

BJARNE ULVESTAD

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THE purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to survey the development of criticism as regards the age of the Eddic poems, and (2) to attempt to date the mythological poems known to most American students of Old Norse, those embodied in Wood's collection,¹ with a short discussion of the views held by the leading scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The *Edda*, a handwritten collection of old poems, is now to be found in the Royal Library of Copenhagen. In 1662, the *Codex Regius*, by far the most important Eddic MS, was received as a gift from Bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson in Iceland by King Frederic III of Denmark. The Renaissance spirit of the seventeenth century engendered an enthusiastic interest for the great Nordic past. It was a time when learned men were busy collecting manuscripts and interpreting runic inscriptions in Scandinavia, and the *Edda* soon became a center of great scholarly activity.

Bishop Brynjólfur and his contemporaries considered the songs to date from times immemorial; they were thought to have been composed in the time preceding the Great Flood, since they did not make any mention of Ham, Moses, Joshua, and other Old Testament personages.² Similar opinions were held by most of the later seventeenth-century writers.

However, the scholarly occupation with the old poems decreased steadily during the Age of Enlightenment. Other studies

¹ F. T. Wood, *Eddic Lays* (Charlottesville, Va., 1940).

² G. Neckel, "Eddaforschung," *ZfddU*, XXXI, p. 8.

came to the fore, and the *Edda* had to wait for better times. In the middle of the eighteenth century, Jens Kraft based partly on the *Edda* his *Kort Fortælling av de Vilde Folks fornemmeste Indretninger, Skikke og Meninger, til Oplysning af det Menne-skeliges Oprindelse og Fremgang i Almindelighed*, an attempt at what has later been termed comparative cultural anthropology;³ and the so-called Modernists, led by Stenerson, used the Eddic poems as evidence for the justification of the unrhymed verse recently introduced into Denmark by Klopstock.⁴ There was little interest in the study of the old poems for their own sake. It seems as if most writers shared the view of Bishop Brynólfur and his followers with regard to their age.

A new period of *Edda* criticism may well be said to commence at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Romantic Movement, with its preoccupation with past times, resuscitated the studies of the *Edda*, and during the rest of what is generally called the first period in the history of *Edda* criticism (1662-1876), one witnesses a steady increase in the number of scholars writing on the subject. Only the main writers in the field will be referred to here, although there are many more names that might be well worth mentioning.

In 1812, F. Rühls edited the *Edda*, and the next year he published *Über den Ursprung der isländischen Poesie aus der Angelsächsischen*. Rühls' view concerning the origin of the poems is indicated by the title, and from that time on the problem of the age of the *Edda* has been closely tied up with that of its home. Rühls met a strong opponent in P. E. Müller, who, in his *Über die Nationalität der altnordischen Gedichte* (1813), set out to prove the fallacy of Rühls' opinion as to the home of the *Edda*.

The first half of the nineteenth century did not, from a modern point of view, produce any great works in the field. Most of the books and articles on the subject may, in the words of F. Jónsson, be considered as "kun spredte forarbejder og famlende forsøg og for det meste ikke nogen kritisk forskning."⁵ But shortly

³ F. Bull and F. Paasche, *Norsk Litteraturhistorie*, II (Oslo, 1928), p. 415.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

⁵ F. Jónsson, *Udsigt over den norsk-islandske filologis historie* (Köbenhavn, 1918), p. 81.

after the middle of the century, R. Keyser's *Nordmændenes Videnskabelighed og Literatur i Middelalderen* was published. This book created a great and lasting controversy outside of Norway, due to the Norwegian author's patriotic bias, which may be illustrated by the following statement: "Den utvivlsomme Sandhed er den, at Literaturen, vi handle om, er en norsk Literatur, Nordmændenes og Islændernes udelukkende og ubestridelige Eiendom; kun dem tilkommer Æren, intet andet av Nordens Folkefærd."⁶ Keyser's contention that the poems were of Norwegian origin was founded on his conviction that they were composed before the middle of the ninth century. Some of the poems, like the *Völuspá*, must have been composed as early as the fifth century, perhaps earlier, according to Keyser.⁷ His method of research is based on subjective interpretations, which are, therefore, not very convincing. By a comparison between the style of the *Edda* and that of the ninth-century skalds he finds that the Eddic poems show the diction of a more distant age, and on that ground he considers his allegation to be "proved with as good reasons as can be required in a case of this kind."⁸

The Dane Sven Grundtvig wrote a dissertation against Keyser, viz. *Om nordens gamle literatur* (1867). Grundtvig maintained that the poems might have been composed in any of the Scandinavian countries. With regard to the age of the *Edda*, he seems to agree with Keyser, and his conclusion runs as follows: "... den i Nordens oldsprog forfattede literatur er i sin helhed at bestemme som den samlede frugt af den nordiske folkestammes i det nationale hedenskab rodfæstede oldtidskultur."⁹

Already before Keyser and Grundtvig, scholars had expressed more moderate views as to the age of the *Edda*. P. A. Munch held that the poems must have been composed during the Viking Period, since "the Asa religion is to so great a degree an expression of the Viking Age that it may well be regarded

⁶ R. Keyser, *Nordmændenes Videnskabelighed og Literatur i Middelalderen* (Christiania, 1866), p. 30.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 268-269.

⁹ F. Jónsson, *op. cit.*, quotation on p. 83.

as bearing in significant particulars the plain impress of the period."¹⁰ In 1867, K. Maurer's *Über die norwegische Auffassung der nordischen Literaturgeschichte* appeared, in which Iceland was considered as the home of the *Edda*, and sceptical statements were expressed as to the distant age of the poems.¹¹ Similar views were set forth by E. Jessen in his *Smaating om oldnordiske Digte og Sagn* (1867).¹² Grundtvig attacked Maurer and Jessen in a few dissertations (1869), but failed to deliver any convincing proof for his own conviction concerning the age of the Eddic poems. G. Storm published a little book in 1869, viz. *Om den gamle norrøne Literatur*. He did not add anything to the solution of the problem of dating the poems, but his book is an interesting attempt at defending Keyser's view on a firmer and more scholarly basis. Pointing to the descriptions of nature in the *Edda*, to archeological and linguistic evidence, he felt justified in stating: "Grundtvig (og Keyser) har aldeles Ret i, at Digtene er Vidne om den nordiske Kultur för Vikingtiden, för 9de Aarh., og Produkt av denne Kultur."¹³

Keyser and his school exerted influence on later writers of literary and cultural histories and surveys. An illustrative example is C. Rosenberg's *Nordboernes Aandsliv*, where the following statement occurs: "De egentlige Gudekvad falde i Tidsrummet mellem det 6te og 9de Aarhundre."¹⁴

The second period of *Edda* studies may be said to start in 1876, with Sophus Bugge's epoch-making lectures at a conference of Nordic philologists. On the basis of metrical and linguistic studies he expressed the conviction that the Eddic poems must be much younger than commonly believed. In a number of books and articles, drawing on the results of his studies of runology, Nordic philology, and comparative mythology, Bugge

¹⁰ P. A. Munch, *Norse Mythology*, in the revision of Magnus Olsen, transl. by S. B. Hustvedt (New York, 1926), p. 117. The original was published in 1840.

¹¹ F. Jónsson, *op. cit.*, p. 83. A similar view is expressed in Maurer's *Über die Ausdrücke, altnordische, altnorwegische und altisländische Sprache* (München, 1867), pp. 215-216.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹³ G. Storm, *Om den gamle norrøne Literatur* (Christiania, 1869), p. 18.

¹⁴ C. Rosenberg, *Nordboernes Aandsliv*, I (Kjöbenhavn, 1878), p. 402; cf. p. 169.

attempted to prove that the majority of the Eddic poems were composed on the Western Isles during the Viking Era, under the influence of Christian ideas and ideals represented by the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon tribes.¹⁵ Thus, he reasoned, the poems could not be older than the beginning of the Viking Age, and since they, for linguistic and metrical reasons, must have been written before the change of language then considered to have taken place around 800, they could not be older than that date.

Bugge's view has been shared by many scholars, e.g., W. P. Ker,¹⁶ G. Vigfusson,¹⁷ and A. C. Bang,¹⁸ and his main works are still considered indispensable to students of the *Edda*. It is significant that E. Noreen refers to him with the superlative epithet, "det största namnet i hela eddaforskningens historia."¹⁹

Bugge's metrical studies caught the interest of another great scholar, E. Sievers, who in his *Allgermanische Metrik* (1893), *Proben einer metrischer Herstellung der Eddalieder* (1885), and *Die Eddalieder klüinglych untersucht und herausgegeben* (1923) tried to reconstruct the original poems by means of metrical analysis. Sievers' studies have had some influence on scholars trying to date the poems,²⁰ but the fact that his reconstruction of the text in 1923 differs widely from his earlier attempts may be considered to indicate the uncertain value of such analysis. The fact that A. Heusler in his metrical and stylistical studies of the *Edda* arrived at conclusions widely different from those of Sievers, might serve as a further indication.²¹ Metrical and

¹⁵ S. Bugge, *The Home of the Eddic Poems*, transl. by W. H. Schofield (London, 1899), p. 376; and *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse* (Christiania, 1889), pp. 3 ff.

¹⁶ W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance* (London, 1908).

¹⁷ G. Vigfusson, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, I (London, 1883). G. Vigfusson was the first scholar to point to the Western Isles as a possible place of Eddic composition, a fact that Bugge acknowledged in his *Home of the Eddic Poems* (p. 376), referred to above.

¹⁸ A. C. Bang, *Den norske kirkes historie* (Kristiania og Kjöbenhavn, 1912), p. 3.

¹⁹ E. Noreen, "Ur Eddaforskningens historia," *Nord. tidsk. för vetenskap*, 17, p. 356.

²⁰ Cf. F. Jónsson, *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie* (Köbenhavn, 1894), p. 44.

²¹ E. Noreen, *op. cit.*, p. 353. Cf. *Ark.*, 23 (1910), pp. 105-106.

stylistic analysis has been carried on by several scholars after Sievers and Heusler, e.g., H. Pipping²² and G. Neckel,²³ but conclusive results that can be used for the dating of the poems seem to be still lacking. Gering is a good example of a scholar misled by more or less subjective metrical analysis. His editions of the *Edda*, from 1904 on, where the old text has been changed and cut and amplified "for metrical reasons," show the deplorable results of uncritical research.²⁴

The so-called "higher criticism," inaugurated by K. Müllenhoff in 1883, in his *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, V, and followed by J. Hoffory²⁵ and others, seems to have added less than had once been expected to the knowledge of the age of the Eddic poems, although it may help throw light on the relative age of individual songs or parts of them. Its aim is to reconstruct the original poems by clearing away "interpolations" and other constituents of the poems that were not there from the beginning. This method has led to a number of divergent results, and S. Nordal seems to refer to it when he complains that the old texts often "blot bliver skydeskive for filologernes virkelige eller indbildte skarpsindighed. . . . filologerne går løs på digtet med knive, gnaver alt kødet af benene og bliver fede der af."²⁶ Only a scholar of great comprehensive knowledge in several related fields, such as literature, linguistics, history, theology, and archeology, can adequately apply the method of "higher criticism." It is a combination of methods rather than an independent one, and its frequently questionable achievements may be ascribed to a lack of understanding of the problems in all their bearings.

The linguistic method of dating the Eddic poems, one of the most brilliant and successful exponents of which was Bugge, has been used by a number of scholars, most of them Scandinavian. Basing their reasoning on the fact that the poems were written in Old West-Scandinavian, and establishing the terminal

²² H. Pipping, "Nya bidrag til Eddametriken," *SNF*, XIV (1934), 2.

²³ G. Neckel, *Beiträge zur Eddaforschung* (Dortmund, 1908).

²⁴ E. Noreen, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

²⁵ J. Hoffory, *Eddastudien* (Berlin, 1889).

²⁶ G. Nordal, *Voluspå* (København, 1927), p. 11.

limit of the primitive Scandinavian language at about 800, the *terminus post quem* was considered to be the early ninth century. The argument that the poems might have been composed before the language shift and that the word-forms were contracted later, was regarded invalid for metrical and other structural reasons. But the discovery of the Eggjum Stone (1917), whose runic inscription, in spite of the age of the stone (archeologists date it at 700-750) shows important changes from the primitive Scandinavian language, seems to warrant an earlier *terminus post quem* of the Eddic poems than that referred to above. It does not, however, seem possible by the linguistic method to arrive at a definite time limit for the individual and collective Eddic poems since they are all written in a fairly uniform language. The divergencies found in some poems, except in cases like that of the *r* in original *wr*, alliterating with *v* (*w*), though justifying some suggestions as to the date of composition, can hardly add much towards really solving the problem of age,²⁷ especially since there are dialect differences to be taken into consideration.²⁸ Furthermore, it is considered a fact that the writer of the *Codex Regius* was copying from one or more manuscripts.²⁹ This increases the difficulty of reaching conclusive linguistic proof concerning age. Neckel's introductory notes to his *Edda* vocabulary clearly indicate the fallacy of overemphasizing the linguistic investigation of the text for purposes of dating the poems, etc.³⁰

The method used by most modern-literary historians, such as F. Jónsson and F. Paasche, is that of comparative cultural studies. The description of nature, the evidence of religious belief or disbelief, references to political and cultural life, etc. are pointed to again and again in the standard literary histories as indicative of date and place of composition. Of special interest to modern scholars endeavoring to date the mythological poems,

²⁷ Cf. G. Neckel, *Edda*, II (Heidelberg, 1927), p. 13.

²⁸ Cf. A. Le Roy Andrews, "Criteria for Dating the Eddic Poems," *PML*, 42 (1927), p. 1047.

²⁹ L. Wimmer and F. Jónsson, *Håndskriftet Nr. 2365 4to gl. Kgl. Samling* (phototypic and diplomatic copy) (Köbenhavn, 1891), p. LXIII.

³⁰ G. Neckel, *op. cit.*, pp. xiii-xxvii.

is the evidence of religion that manifests itself in the texts. The following statement by L. M. Hollander voices the view of a modern scholar:

So far, neither the study of metre, of language, of legendary form, nor of specific references, or any other philological method known to us, has rewarded scholars with tangible criteria acceptable to all, or even a majority, of scholars. Under such conditions the only good chronological hold for approximately dating at least a few lays has seemed—and the above-quoted remark illustrates this faith³¹—has seemed the conversion of Western Scandinavia accomplished about the end of the tenth century.³²

A statement by A. LeRoy Andrews supports this allegation: "Probably the most definitely conclusive argument from content applies primarily to the mythological poems and is derived from the status of the heathen religious belief which they reveal."³³

F. Jónsson³⁴ employs the method described above for his dating of the poems: their flora and fauna, and their descriptions of nature. On the basis of his observations he sets down the age of each poem in terms of century and decades as follows:

c. 875–900	<i>Hávamál IV</i>
c. 900 (890)	<i>Þrymskviða, Baldrs draumar</i>
c. 900 (890)	<i>Skirnismál</i>
etc. etc. ³⁵	

In spite of strong adverse criticism on the part of many scholars,³⁶ Jónsson later maintained his views in *Den islandske litteraturs historie* (1907), but one feels compelled to agree that his theories are based on too many arbitrary and inconclusive reasons. F. Paasche uses Jónsson's method of dating the poems,³⁷

³¹ The quotation referred to is the following, taken from F. Jónsson's *Den islandske litteraturs historie*. In Hollander's translation: "Concerning the mythological poems of the *Edda*, it follows from their very contents and their relation to paganism that they were composed in heathen times. Precisely this fact is an excellent point of departure for dating them."

³² L. M. Hollander, "Were the Mythological Poems of the *Edda* Composed in the Pre-Christian Era?" *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XXVI (1927), p. 96.

³³ A. LeRoy Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 1048.

³⁴ F. Jónsson, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 ff.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 65–66.

³⁶ G. Nordal, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

³⁷ a) F. Paasche, *Landet med de mørke Skibene* (Oslo, 1938). b) F. Bull and F. Paasche, *Norsk litteraturhistorie*, I (Kristiania, 1924).

but does not try to reach any definite conclusions. On the whole, a scholar with a comprehensive knowledge of the field of Nordic philology and literature will scarcely venture any definite solution of the problem as to the age of the Eddic poems. A discussion founded on a deep understanding of the problems involved is far to be preferred to any strong vindication of theories built on arbitrary views and hasty conclusions.

An interesting attempt at dating the Eddic poems in the light of modern archeology has been made by B. Nerman.³⁸ The author bases his theory of age on the various datable archeological finds in Scandinavia that include things of gold or silver, and bronze objects mentioned or "intimated" in the *Edda*. His reasoning is sometimes marred by rather subjective observations, and too frequently he seems to trust his own memory rather than to seek factual affirmation of his statements. But his book at least indicates a method that may some day bring valuable results. In this connection, mention may be made of an interesting find which has recently been made in England (1939), that of an Anglo-Saxon ship in a mound at Sutton Hoo.³⁹ Archeologists consider it to be as old as the seventh century, and some swords supposed to be made in Sweden seem to point to an early cultural relationship between the Scandinavians and the Anglo-Saxons.

The *terminus ante quem* of the Eddic poems can be more readily arrived at than the *terminus post quem*. The former is generally fixed at ca. 1230. The most valid external evidence is Snorri's quotation of Eddic poems in his *Gylfaginning*, which is thought to have been composed around 1220-30. Of internal evidence, one may especially mention the presence of words showing phonological changes generally considered to have taken place around 1200 (the shift of stress in diphthongs, the quality of unstressed *u* and *i*, the contracted forms of various word forms, etc.). Thus one may with some certainty define the chronological boundaries of the Eddic poems as not exceeding, upwards and downwards, 750 and 1230. Some scholars consider 800 a

³⁸ B. Nerman, *The Poetic Edda in the Light of Archeology* (London, 1931).

³⁹ A good popular article on the subject is to be found in the April issue of the *Scientific American Magazine* (1951), pp. 24-30.

more plausible *terminus post quem*. Having thus accepted the broad period of 750 (800)—1230 as the time during which the Eddic poems must have been composed, one is confronted with the problem of further dating the individual poems. With regard to this problem, the scholars are still at variance, and any universally acceptable theory is yet to be presented.

In the following, an attempt will be made at dating the seven mythological poems in Wood's collection mentioned above. The poems will be discussed in the order of Wood's presentation, and footnote references will only be made to books and articles not commonly read by non-specialists in the Old Scandinavian literatures. The standard literary histories, such as those written by F. Jónsson and F. Paasche, will be referred to only by the authors' names in parentheses, without indication of page number, except for cases of singular interest.

1) *Þrymskviða*

This poem, found only in the *Codex Regius*, is probably the best known of all the Eddic songs. Jónsson assumed that it was written in the last decade of the ninth century,⁴⁰ basing his observation partly on the fact that Þrym is sitting on a mound, a custom supposed to have become obsolete around 900. Another corroborative element is, according to Jónsson, the boisterous humor evinced in the story. Further, the old dative form *þóri* (line 19) in *Codex Regius*, seems to confirm his theory of age; but the form is highly questionable, and Bugge writes *þór*.⁴¹ Also, the excellence of the poem with regard to the telling of the story and its rhythm is considered indicative of an early date of composition.

Paasche warns against drawing conclusions concerning age on the ground that the poem is well made,⁴² since that might as well be due solely to the author, and the conclusion of Paasche's discussion of the date problem is just as noncommittal

⁴⁰ All references to Jónsson are based on his literary history of 1894 (see footnote 20).

⁴¹ S. Bugge, *Norræn Fornkvæði* (Christiania, 1867), p. 126.

⁴² All references to Paasche are based on his literary history of 1924 (cf. footnote 37, b).

as that of Heusler, which runs as follows: "Man kann sich wohl fragen: ist das Lied sehr alt oder sehr jung? Stammt es aus einer Zeit, die noch einfacher dichtete, oder aus einer Zeit, die von dem schweren Erzählerepos loskam?"⁴³

Since the text contains few criteria or none for dating it linguistically, and since the rhythm and style and the attitude towards religion shown in the poem cannot be made to yield any firm foundation to build on in that respect, the age of the *Þrymskviða* will probably remain a puzzle to scholars for years to come. It is certain that it could not have been written before the transition from Primitive Scandinavian into Old Norse; its *fornyrðislag* verse type is too regular for that. The fact that it represents a seemingly irreverent attitude towards the gods might be considered indicative of Christian influence and a resulting lack of respect for the old deities. However, there are so many instances of a similar attitude on the part of other peoples in periods of firm belief that no acceptable support can be claimed for that deduction (Paasche). Thus it seems that only a conditional conclusion can be made concerning the age of the poem: If it was not written in the time of disbelief brought about by the influence of Christian tenets (later tenth century), a rather early age must be assumed, an age when people were firmly rooted in their religious faith and could afford to joke about their gods. This would point to the ninth century as the most likely date. Neckel observes the poem's similarity to certain West Germanic verses, e.g., the *Merseburger Magic Formulas*,⁴⁴ and also suggests an early date of composition. The similarity, according to Neckel, can be proved by the absence of ornate adjectives, by the verse form, and by the simplicity of style. But his enumeration of reasons why the poems could not have been written in a period of Christian influence is not altogether convincing. The following lines, which represent one of his arguments, may speak for themselves:

Dem klaräugigen nordischen bauernvolke aber hat in alten zeiten die spekulation sehr fern gelegen. Es stand mit seinem gotte auf einem gemüthlichen duz-fuss,

⁴³ *Thule*, edited by F. Niedner, with introduction and notes by A. Heusler (Jena, 1920), II, p. 11.

⁴⁴ G. Neckel, *Beiträge zur Eddaforschung* (Breslau, 1908), pp. 47 ff.

und für dieses verhältnis galt, was auch für menschliche verhältnisse gilt: was sich gern hat, das neckt sich. Zu berücksichtigen ist auch, dass der hohe kothurn der heldendichtung alle scherzhaften stoffe ausschloss. So musste der heitere witz—wenn anders er sich überhaupt ausleben sollte—sich an die götter halten.⁴⁵

It does not seem necessary to deliver any formal refutation of this view; it is enough to point to poems like the *Völuspá* and the *Hávamál*. Instead of attempting to substantiate his preceding theories—which are both ingenious and plausible enough—on such romantic foundation, it would be better to make some reference to more tangible evidence. The fact that Þórr is often the hero of such humorous stories (cf. Hrafnkell Freysgoði, who called the god Frey his friend and made him his partner, etc.) would be a more appropriate argument in this connection.

2) *Baldrs draumar*

This poem is found only in the *Codex Arnarnagaeus*, and thus it does not belong in what we generally term the *Elder Edda*. Jónsson, because of definite similarities with *Þrymskviða* (*Þrk.* v. 14: *Bdr.* v. 1; the transition between v. 1 and v. 2 in both poems; *Þrk.* v. 5 [1], v. 9 [1]: *Bdr.* v. 3 [3]), assumes that both poems must have been written by the same author, and dates *Bdr.* at ca. 900 (890). Paasche counts up similarities with the *Völuspá*, but finds the *Bdr.* "paler" in parts. He considers the authors of the two poems to have used the same sources, older (lost) poems about Balder. Neckel refutes Jónsson's assumption of the *Þrk.* and the *Bdr.* as being composed by the same author on the ground that the style of the two poems, apart from sporadic similarities, is quite different. He holds that the author of the *Bdr.* was imitating the *Þrk.* when he occasionally used epic diction, but the dialogue was his natural form of poetic expression.⁴⁶ The imitation of the *Þrk.* should then point to a later date, which Neckel believes to have been in the twelfth century. Hollander gives preference to the view of such scholars as Noreen and Neckel, holding that it must have been written

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

by a skillful imitator of the ancient manner, perhaps in the twelfth century.⁴⁷ Bugge considers the poem "ældgammelt."⁴⁸ H. A. Bellows assumes that it was written "not later than the first half of the tenth century."⁴⁹

The widely divergent conclusions drawn by various authors concerning the dating of this poem point to a paucity of evidence. The allegation that the poem is a late imitation of the Eddic poetry appears to be contradicted by its lofty diction and its serious undertones. Its similarity with the *Þrk.*, the *Vsp.*, the *Vm.*, the *Grip.*, and other Eddic poems seems to mark it as belonging to the same cultural tradition, and the inexplicable v. 12 (3-4) should indicate an early poet rather than a late imitator. Further, the abrupt beginning of the *Bdr.* warrants the assumption of a lost introduction, which in turn may be ascribed to a long oral tradition before the poem was written down. Also the simplicity of style is worth mentioning as possible proof of an early date. No trace of Christian influence can be read out of the text. In v. 10 (3-4) Odin wants to know who will avenge the future evil deeds, which is certainly in the spirit of the Old Norse tradition. Thus, the present writer prefers to rank the *Bdr.* with the older Eddic poems.

3) *Skirnismál*

Though it contains no definite clue for dating it, most scholars agree that this poem must be one of the oldest lays in the *Codex Regius*. Jónsson puts it as early as 900, and Paasche points out that its *ljóðaháttir* verse form would have survived even the shift from Primitive Scandinavian to Old Norse. Hollander cautiously suggests the tenth century,⁵⁰ and his view is shared by Bellows.⁵¹ The poem is a singular example of Old Norse verse at its best, and it seems to contain very few interpolations.

⁴⁷ *The Poetic Edda, Transl. with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes by Lee M. Hollander* (Austin, Texas, 1928), p. 136.

⁴⁸ S. Bugge, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

⁴⁹ *The Poetic Edda, Transl. from the Icel. with an Introduction and Notes by Henry Adams Bellows*, I (New York, 1923), p. 195.

⁵⁰ L. M. Hollander, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁵¹ H. A. Bellows, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

The whole poem, except for a few prose passages, is in dialogue form, and there is no break in the development of events. Paasche and other scholars suggest that it is a dramatization of the rites of an old Frey cult, symbolizing the union of the god with the goddess of fertility. This points to connections with a highly primitive form of religion and corroborates the hypothesis of an early date of composition. The verse is quite regular apart from the stanzas 27-35, which give a convincing demonstration of the magic formulas of primitive people. The vivid characterization and the atmosphere of dramatic tension show a certain resemblance to the *Þrk.* and the *Ls.*, which might make it seem reasonable to assume that the three poems were composed in the same period. One thing which does not appear to be in harmony with the current view of the Old Norsemen is the element of love, so strongly stressed in this poem. But it is not the love of the Courtly Era. Frey is not represented as a suffering lover proclaiming his yearning to the world in general, as did the knights of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Only with difficulty is Skirnir able to make Frey confide to him his secret. Nor does Gerðr show any similarity to the ladies of the Age of Chivalry. She is not won by means of sweet words and sickly protestations of love; she is won by means of the threats of magic spells uttered by a persistent representative of her lover. Thus the poem cannot be said to bear traces of chivalric influence. At least the reasons against are as good as those in favor of that view.

4) *Vafþrúðnismál*

The *Vm.* succeeds the *Vs.* in the *Codex Regius*. Part of it (from v. 20 on) is also to be found in the *Codex Arnarnagaeus*. Snorri quotes several verses in his *Edda*, and numerous obvious allusions to the *Vm.* appear in the paraphrasing prose text of the same book.

Jónsson reasons, on the ground that the composer must have been trying to maintain the excellence of the old religion in defense against the new Christian faith, that the poem belongs in the early tenth century. It is difficult to read any proof of such a theory out of the text. Besides, a poem of religious champion-

ship must be assumed to offer at least some indication as to the opposing belief. The encyclopedic character of the poem is rather indicative of an effort to give, in verse form, the cosmogenic tenets of an accepted religion, some sort of an Old Norse catéchism. The dialogue between Odin and Vafþrúðnir adds dramatic interest to the presentation and thus facilitates the learning and the retention of the creed. The *ljóðaháttir* verse form might have survived even the great shift of language (Paasche), which is an additional reason for assuming an early age.

Hollander "suspects" that the poem may be the result of "later, maybe skaldic, effort,"⁵² a supposition which the simplicity of rhythm and diction appear to contradict. It is more probable that the dialogue was composed about the same time as the *Þrk.*, in a time of firm belief rather than in one of changing religion. The word-exchange between Odin and the giant is not without dramatic tension: The victory of the god is won only in the last stanza. This points to an intentional effort on the part of the author to keep the interest of his audience until the last. Further, in this poem there is no bookish atmosphere suggesting an aristocratic pride in knowledge, in spite of all the information given. The simplicity and the serious tone of the poem do not, in the opinion of the present writer, harmonize with the conjecture that a skald has made the poem for use as a handbook in old mythology. For reasons stated above, one may be led to prefer the assumption of an early date of composition, at the end of the ninth century, or at the beginning of the tenth.

5) *Grimnismál*

This poem, written in fairly regular *ljóðaháttir*, except for a few stanzas with redundant lines and faulty meter (mostly interpolations), is to be found in the *Codex Regius* and in the *Codex Arnemagnaeus*, both places in complete form. In Snorri's *Edda* there is also a large part of it (about 20 stanzas) in prose paraphrase.

The rather long prose passage at the beginning introduces Odin's monologue, in which a large part consists of a longwinded

⁵² L. M. Hollander, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

enumeration of proper names. Most scholars agree that these verses of names have been interpolated at a later date than that of the original composition of the poem.⁶³ If these interpolations are taken out, a clear and coherent story emerges, that of Odin punishing a royal miser. The poem presents the highest god in his full glory, as a mild but just god, and is void of "Christian elements." The wealth of wisdom by which the god gradually reveals his true identity is very reminiscent of the *Vs.*⁶⁴ and the *Vm.*, and points to a chronological proximity to these two poems. Jónsson, though admitting that no definite key to the solution of the problem of age can be found, takes this view, for similar reasons. Against the theory of late composition as a defense against the Christian claims of religious superiority, arguments analogous to those applied in the discussion of the *Vm.* (above) may be advanced.

6) *The Lokasenna*

The text is found only in the *Codex Regius*, except for one stanza quoted by Snorri in his *Edda*.

The *Ls.* is equalled only by the *Þrk.* in vivid dramatic vigor and trenchant piquancy of dialogue; it is the work of a first-class poet. The characters stand out individually in a candid plasticity almost suggestive of flesh-and-blood models, and their racy exchange of shocking and humiliating insults is amazing even to present-day readers. The *ljóðaháttir* verse flows along with comparative ease, and there is plentiful evidence of a striking sense of the telling word.

The all-important questions with respect to the age of the poem refer to the intention of the composer and may be stated as follows: Was he, under the influence of the Christian creed, consciously ridiculing and deprecating the old gods? or: Was he merely retelling in verse form an old mythological tale about Loki's punishment for his impudence towards the gods? Most scholars tend to prefer an affirmative answer to the first question,

⁶³ Cf. S. Bugge, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁶⁴ As will be seen later, I do not feel justified in ascribing the composition of *Vs.* to the period of strong Christian influence, as is commonly done by scholars in the field.

e.g., Jónsson, Hollander, Bellows, and Neckel. Paasche makes references to the devil's vituperation of Christ in serious Middle Age poems, and to the fact that Þórr finally stands his ground in the *Ls.*, as contradicting evidence. He also makes mention of the historical fact that a man called Hjalte Skeggjason was punished by the Icelandic government in 999 for calling Freya a bitch.⁵⁵ This would point to a very natural defense position taken by the last champions of the old faith against the new. The charming conclusion of Paasche's argumentation deserves to be quoted here:

Nå er det nok så at Lokes ord kan synes slemme, i hvilken tid de end må være digtet . . . Men det blir med Lokasenna som med Trymskvadet og Hávamål, de digt som forteller om Tors mjödglæde og Odins fuldskap: I en tid da den gamle religion var selvfølgelig snarere end i dager da der stod strid om den, kunde digterne indrømme sine guder store og i grunden misundelsesverdige friheter.⁵⁶

The standpoint of the present writer concerning the problem is a logical result of his preferred dating of the *Þrk.* Accepting a period of relatively unimpaired heathen belief as the background of the latter, it does not seem amiss to ascribe the *Ls.* to the same or even a more distant age. Loki's punishment, recorded in the prose passage at the end of the poem, does not point to a composer aiming at deprecating the old gods. A victorious Loki would be more appropriate if that purpose were to be fulfilled. Since he is the standing culprit in Old Scandinavian mythology, why not accept him also here as a product of genuine heathendom? One might forward the argument that the ineffectual attempts on the part of the gods at defending themselves against Loki's insults indicate a lack of faith in the power of the old deities. But this general inability of self-defense might just as well be ascribed to the poet's sense of dramatic tension. The powerful effect at the end of the poem is similar to that of the Greek plays at the arrival of the *deus ex machina* and serves to heighten the respect for and admiration of the one invincible god. The composer might well have had Þórr as his special friend and champion, as Hrafnkell Freysgoði had Frey, or the poem might have been composed in times when and in regions where

⁵⁵ F. Paasche, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Þórr was considered the supreme god. This would then point to Norway, where the thunder-god's early popularity can be witnessed in the many place names whose first element is *Tor-*, or *Tors-*. The rare mythological allusions found only in the *Ls.* could, of course, be ascribed to the imagination of the poet, but there seems to be just as good reason to consider the tales of the gods as libertine lovers as very old and/or as having grown out of a rather isolated tradition.

That the poem was composed after the language shift, is evident from the verse form. Thus a date after the time of that shift, and rather before than after 900, may be suggested.

7) *The Völuspá*

This *summa mythologiae* of the Nordic past is probably the most widely discussed text of the *Edda*. Many elements of the poem, such as its sudden transitions and its puzzling presentation of vague mythological lore, have drawn a multitude of scholars into a learned controversy about several problems. The poem is found in both the *Codex Regius* and the *Hauksbók*, and Snorri paraphrases about half of its stanzas in his *Edda*, not without occasional divergencies from the first two texts.

The problem of its age is still an important subject of scholarly discussion. Jónsson considers its composition to date back to the first half of the tenth century (935-940), a period when the main representatives of the old faith found it necessary to disprove the Christian claim of the Asa religion's inferiority. He puts the poem in connection with the Norwegian opposition against the missionary enterprise of King Hákon after 935 and dates it accordingly.

Hoffory builds his theory mainly on a comparative study of the language of the *Völuspá* and that of the Rök Stone (considered to date from the beginning of the tenth century). He observes that the unstressed *u* and *i* in word forms found on the Rök Stone, such as **sunur*, **hørrur*, and **herir*, had already become contracted at the time when the *Vs.* was composed, else the meter of the poem would have been spoiled in the time of transition from long to shortened forms.⁶⁷ In this way he refutes

⁶⁷ J. Hoffory, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

Müllenhoff's claim that the *Vs.* must have been composed at the end of the eighth century or at the beginning of the ninth.⁵⁸ Hoffory dates it at the middle of the tenth century, giving the new contracted forms half a century to consolidate, and at the same time enabling himself to combine his linguistic theory with that of strong Christian influence in the period of composition. Jónsson questions the validity of Hoffory's conclusion on the ground that the development of the Old Norse language could scarcely proceed along exactly similar lines, that there may have been wide chronological and geographical divergencies.

Bugge's theory of Christian influence and borrowing from the old books of sibylline wisdom⁵⁹ has been refuted, point by point, by Müllenhoff,⁶⁰ and need not detain us here. Of greater interest is Paasche's hypothesis that the ideological and ethical similarity to poems of other peoples does not necessarily point to influence in the general meaning of the term. It may as well be ascribed to "det oprindelige fællesskap mellem de ariske folk; men den kan også bero på at den sökende tanke under forskjellige himmelströk naturlig er drevet ind på samme baner."⁶¹

Paasche leaves the problem of dating the *Vs.* open to discussion. He only indicates that the ninth century is as good a guess as the tenth.

Modern scholars tend to regard the parts of the *Vs.* that are supposed to prove Christian influence, as late interpolations.⁶² Thus the original poem could easily be as old as the ninth century.

Felix Wagner's view as to the age of the poem is categorically stated in the following sentence: "Il repose sur un document plus ancien qui a été remanié et amplifié vers 970,"⁶³ and he maintains that the *Vs.* "a subi l'influence de la foi nouvelle qui s'en-

⁵⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁹ S. Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Hellesagns Oprindelse* (Christiania, 1889), pp. 63-64.

⁶⁰ Cf. J. Hoffory, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

⁶¹ F. Paasche, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁶² Cf. L. M. Hollander, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁶³ F. Wagner, "Völuspá ou predications de la prophétesse," *Revue belge de phil. et d'hist.*, XIII (1934), p. 45.

filtrait petit à petit dans les pays du Nord par suite des relations constantes des Scandinaves avec l'Irlande et les Iles Britanniques devenues, dès VII siècle, des foyers de culture latine et chrétienne."⁶⁴ Wagner seems to be influenced by Bugge's theories to such a degree that he does not even bother to give the reasons for his apparent conviction, but it is worth noticing that the great Norwegian scholar has not yet lost his disciples.

Nordal holds that the *Vsp.* is not much older than ca. 1000, basing his argument on the evidence of the ethical culture and the poetical taste reflected in it, and on the fact that it has been influenced by the *Hávamál*, the *Sigurðarkviða en meiri*, and the *Rígsþula*.⁶⁵

Hollander claims that it is "quite conceivable" that the *Vs.* "was composed a century or two after the introduction of Christianity."⁶⁶ He does not consider the poem's dependence on or independence of Christianity relevant to the problem of age, and hence assumes that such relationship "will never yield any chronological hold."⁶⁷ Thus Hollander's view concerning the date of composition appears to be similar to that of Paasche: One cannot know.

This survey represents only a fraction of the ideas which have been expressed in hundreds of books and articles during the centuries of *Edda* criticism, but it gives sufficient evidence of the fact that the criteria for dating the *Vs.* cannot be clearly defined. If one chooses, for example, to decide on its age according to whether it shows Christian influence or not, one cannot reason in any direction without bumping against the counter arguments of some competent scholar.

However, one cannot help feeling that the *Vs.* is not just a piece of religious propaganda, in spite of the first stanza. It bears all the marks of inspired genius. And a mere collector of old lore could never have risen to these heights of prophetic

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶⁵ S. Nordal, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

⁶⁶ L. M. Hollander, "Were the Mythological Poems of the Edda Composed in the Pre-Christian Era?," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XXVI (1927), p. 101.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

vision; only a strong belief and great religious fervor could produce such noble thoughts. That the poet knew, if only in broad outlines, the Christian creed and its conception of the end of the world seems to be beyond doubt. This is particularly clear in the final verses. But he either confused it—in the moments of inspiration—with his own tenets, if the Asa religion had any such that were sharply defined, or the tempestuous and war-like times had created in his mind a strong longing for peace which drove him into feeling the Utopian biblical visions of future happiness as personal conviction. The tone of the whole poem, in fact, evinces the deep religious experience of the mystic. Thus the time between 900 and 950 appears most likely to have produced a work like the *Völuspá*. Both the cultural-political and the religious conditions were certainly chaotic enough to inspire a poetic genius with lofty visions of peace and brotherhood.

AMERICAN SCANDINAVIAN BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1953

WALTER JOHNSON, *Editor*

BIBLIOGRAPHERS: Sverre Arestad, University of Washington; Richard Beck, University of North Dakota; Walter Johnson, University of Washington; Jens Nyholm, Northwestern University; and Kenneth Soderland, Library of Congress.

THE bibliography is an annotated list of the noteworthy books, articles, and reviews dealing with the Scandinavian languages and literatures which appeared in the United States during 1953. The bibliography includes primarily items of concern to those who are directly engaged in Scandinavian studies.

The year is listed only when the item is a review of a book published before 1953 or when the item is one missed in assembling the bibliography for the previous year.

Abbreviations

AB	<i>Augustana Bulletin</i>
AL	<i>American Literature</i>
ASM	<i>American Swedish Monthly</i>
ASR	<i>American Scandinavian Review</i>
BA	<i>Books Abroad</i>
BASI	<i>Bulletin of the American Swedish Institute</i> (Minneapolis)
GR	<i>Germanic Review</i>
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
MLN	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
MLQ	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
NASR	<i>Norwegian American Studies and Records</i>
NYHTB	<i>New York Herald Tribune Books</i>
NYTB	<i>New York Times Books</i>
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i>
PQ	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
SAQ	<i>South Atlantic Quarterly</i>
SP	<i>Studies in Philology</i>
SPHQ	<i>Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly</i>
SR	<i>Saturday Review</i>
SS	<i>Scandinavian Studies</i>
TA	<i>Theatre Arts</i>

A number within parentheses before an item refers to an entry for the same item in a previous bibliography.

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Björnstjerne Björnson

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Sigurd Hoel

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Henrik Ibsen

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Theodore Jorgenson's translation of "Paa vidderne" with comments.

846. Thompson, Alan Reynold. "Ibsen as Psychoanalyst," *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 3 (1951), pp. 34-39.

An appreciative consideration of Ibsen in light of Arne Duve's *Symbolikken i Henrik Ibsens Skuespill* (Oslo, 1945) and Ingjald Nissen's *Sjelelige kriser i Menneskets Liv: Henrik Ibsen og den moderne psykologi* (Oslo, 1931).

847. Jorgenson, Theodore. *Ibsen Journal* (No. 3 of *Christian Liberty*. Published by Professor Jorgenson, 815 West Second Street, Northfield, Minn.). Price, \$0.50.

Contains "Henrik Wergeland: Christmas Eve," a translation by P. J. Hertsgaard of Wergeland's poem, pp. 3-8; "Egill's Lament" ("Sona-Torrek": Loss of a Son) of Egill Skallagrímsson, translated from the Norwegian and compared with the original Old Icelandic by Johan Odden and Eirik Olav, pp. 9-15; "In the Springtime of Life," a translation by Theodore Jorgenson of an Ibsen fragment, pp. 16-17; "In the Picture Gallery," a translation by Theodore Jorgenson of an Ibsen poem, pp. 20-32; "Terje Viken," a translation by Theodore Jorgenson of Ibsen's longest narrative poem, pp. 38-48. Theodore Jorgenson has a comment on each of the three Ibsen poems, respectively, pp. 18-19, 32-37, and 49-57.

848. Krutch, Joseph Wood. "Ibsen and the Chasm between Past and Future." "Modernism" in *Modern Drama: A Definition and an Estimate*, pp. 1-22.

A generalizing lecture delivered at Cornell University in October, 1952. See also Items 780 and 876. Stresses Ibsen's relativism.

849. Lamm, Martin. "Henrik Ibsen," *Modern Drama*, pp. 96-134. See Items 835 and 838.

850. Three Plays by Henrik Ibsen. Translated by Una Ellis-Fermor. Penguin Books, Baltimore. Pp. 368. Price, \$0.65.

The Pillars of the Community, *The Wild Duck*, and *Hedda Gabler*. New translations with introductions.

Christian Braunmann Tullin

851. Noreng, Harald. *Christian Brunmann Tullin*, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, Oslo, 1951. Pp. 219.

Rev. by Hedin Bronner in *SS*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 20-21.

Sigrid Undset

852. Winsnes, A. H. *Sigrid Undset. A Study in Christian*

Realism. Translated by P. G. Foote. Sheed and Ward, New York. Pp. 258. Price, \$3.00.

Rev. by Sverre Arestad in *SS*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 158-161; by Francis Bull in *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, p. 271.

Johan S. C. Welhaven

853. Welhaven, Johan S. C. "Ole Bull," *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 1, p. 45.

The poem translated by Jacob Hodnefeld.

VI. Swedish

See also Items 720, 723, 726, 728, 729, 745, 750, 776, and 778-783.

General

854. Fehrman, Carl. *Diktaren och döden. Dödsbild och förgängelse tanke i litteraturen från antiken till 1700-talet*. Bonniers, Stockholm, 1952. Pp. 423. Price, 30 crowns.

Rev. by Walter W. Gustafson in *SS*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 156-158.

855. Fleisher, Frederic. "The Swedish Academy," *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 4, pp. 305-310.

General information about the Academy and its activities.

856. Hewes, Henrik. "All This, and Smörgåsbord, Too." *SR*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 38, pp. 28-29.

An interesting account of theater life in Stockholm with some mention of the principal traditions.

857. Johnson, Amandus. *Swedish Contributions to American Freedom*. Vol. I. Swedish Colonial Foundation, Philadelphia. Pp. 692.

Among many other things, contains information about Gustaf Philip Creutz. Rev. by Raymond S. Lindgren in *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, pp. 272.

858. Jorgenson, Theodore. "Kalevala, the Land of the Heroes," *Christian Liberty*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 30-44.

An introductory account of the Finnish epic with some account of Swedish scholars and writers' interest in it.

859. Leach, Henry Goddard. "Playwrights and Poets in Sweden," *BASI*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, pp. 3-8.

Dr. Leach's commentary on the contemporary literary scene.

860. Sydow, John. "Government Subsidy in the Theatre," *7 Arts*, pp. 150-158. PermaBooks, Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York. Price, \$0.50.

A highly informative article on government subsidy to Swedish theaters and its effects on the development of Swedish drama and Swedish theatrical activities.

Gunnar Ekelöf

861. Hunter, Grace. "Two Contemporary Swedish Poets," *Prairie Schooner*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, pp. 57-67.

On Gunnar Ekelöf and Harry Martinson. Includes quotations in English translation.

Verner von Heidenstam

862. Heidenstam, Verner von. "Christmas Eve at Finnstad: A Story about Saint Birgitta of Sweden," *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 4, pp. 351-357.

Translated by Margaret Sperry.

863. Heidenstam, Verner von. "The Haunted Room at Ingvaldsboda," *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 1, pp. 46-50.

A short story translated by Signhild V. Gustafson.

Eyvind Johnson

864 (699). Johnson, Eyvind. *Return to Ithaca*. With a Preface by Mark van Doren. Thames and Hudson, New York, 1952. Pp. 474. Price, \$4.00.

A translation by M. A. Michael of *Strändernas svall* (1946), which retells the *Odyssey* as a modern novel. Rev. by Milton Crane in *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, Nov. 2, 1952, p. 4; in *Kirkus*, Vol. 20, Sept. 1, 1952, p. 571; by Herbert Cahoon in *Library Journal*, Vol. 77, Oct. 15, 1952, p. 1809; in *New Yorker*, Vol. 28, Nov. 22, 1952, p. 198; and by Tangye Lean in *Speculum*, Vol. 189, Oct. 17, 1952, p. 514; and by Richard B. Vowles, in *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 1, pp. 74-75.

Klinkowström

865 (701). *Baron Klinkowström's America 1818-1820*. Translated and edited by Franklin D. Scott. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1952. Pp. xiv+262. (Northwestern University Studies. Social Sciences Series No. 8). Price, \$5.00.

Rev. by Eugene H. Roseboom in *SPHQ*, Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 25-28; by Nils G. Sahlin in *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, p. 273; by Warren S. Tryon in *NYTB*, Vol. LVIII, No. 15, p. 6; by Lynn W. Turner in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* Vol. LX, No. 2, pp. 335-336; and by Harold A. Williams in *Baltimore Sunday Sun*, Nov. 1, 1953.

866. Scott, Franklin D. "Swedish Trade with America in 1820: A Letter of Advice from Baron Axel Klinkowström," *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. XXV, No. 4, pp. 407-414.

Not included in Item 701.

Pär Lagerkvist

867. Mjöberg, Jöran. "Pär Lagerkvist and the Ancient Greek Drama," *SS*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 46-51.

Points out parallels between Greek dramas and several Lagerkvist plays.

Oscar Levertin

868. Murdock, Eleanor E. "Oscar Levertin: Swedish Critic of French Realism," *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 137-150.

On Zola and Flaubert.

Gertrud Lilja

869. Lilja, Gertrud. "Puppet Play," *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 3, pp. 250-254.

A short story translated by Signhild V. Gustafson from Lilja's *Människor*.

Carl von Linné

870 (712). Hagberg, Knut. *Carl Linnaeus*. Translated by Alan Blair. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York. Pp. 264. Price, \$4.50.

A biography. Rev. by Elizabeth Yates in *Christian Science Monitor*, Apr. 16, p. 11; by Karl Brown in *Library Journal*, Vol. 78, Mar. 1, p. 446; and in *New Yorker*, Vol. 29, May 9, p. 140.

Harry Martinson

See Item 861.

Vilhelm Moberg

871. Johnson, Walter. "Moberg's Emigrants and the Naturalistic Tradition," *SS*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 134-146.

Moberg's debt to naturalism.

Axel Munthe

872. Munthe, Gustaf and Vexküll-Schwein, Gudrun. *The Story of Axel Munthe*. Translated from the Swedish by Malcom Munthe. Dutton, New York. Pp. 234. Price, \$3.75 (boards).

"A biography—not a full one—the idea of which has been abandoned for the present, but a beginning, written by the celebrated Swedish doctor's cousin, also a doctor, and by his close friend, Baroness Gudrun Vexküll."

873. Munthe, Axel Martin Fredrik. *The Story of San Michele*. Silver anniversary edition. New introduction by George N. Shuster. Dutton, New York. Pp. 562. Price, \$3.75 (boards).

August Strindberg

874 (444). Bentley, Eric. "Strindberg, the One and the Many," *In Search of Theatre*, Knopf, New York. Pp. 134-143.

See *Theatre Arts*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, pp. 20-25.

875. Jorgenson, Theodore. "August Strindberg," *Christian Liberty*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 45-64.

A general résumé.

876. Krutch, Joseph Wood. "Strindberg and Irreconcilable Conflict," "*Modernism*" in *Modern Drama: A Definition and an Estimate*, pp. 23-42.

A generalizing lecture on Strindberg whom he calls "Ibsen's Danish [sic] contemporary, rival, and opponent." Delivered in October, 1952 at Cornell University. See also Items 780 and 848. Stresses Strindberg's "irrationalism."

877. Lamm, Martin. "August Strindberg," *Modern Drama*, pp. 135-151. See also Items 835 and 838.

878. Lindström, Hans. *Hjärnornas kamp—psykologiska idéer och motiv i Strindbergs åttiotalsdiktning*. Appelbergs, Uppsala, 1952. Pp. 330.

Rev. by Carl E. W. L. Dahlström in *SS*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 75-77.

Emanuel Swedenborg

879. Erdman, David V. "Blake's Early Swedenborgianism: A Twentieth-century Legend," *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 247-257.

880. Roos, Jacques. *Aspects littéraires du mysticisme philosophique et l'influence de Boehme et de Swedenborg au début du romantisme: William Blake, Novalis, Ballanche*. P. H. Heitz, Strasbourg, 1951. Pp. 460.

Rev. by George M. Harper in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 188-189.

881 (717). Sigstedt, Cyriel O. *The Swedenborg Epic*. Bookman Associates, New York, 1952. Pp. 517. Price, \$4.50.

Rev. by Ernst Benz in *Review of Religion*, Vol. XVIII, No. 1-2, pp. 75-78; and by H. G. L. in *ASR*, Vol. XLI, No. 2, p. 175. See also in the same number, pp. 134-135, Dr. Leach's account of the Swedenborgian center.

Esaias Tegnér

882. *Frithiof's Saga* by Esaias Tegnér. Translated into English verse by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Lucius Sherman, Thomas and Martha Holcomb, and William Lewery Blackley with the introductory notes to the cantos by Longfellow and the general introduction by Bayard Taylor. Illustrated with drawings by Eric Palmquist. The Limited Editions Club. P. A. Norstedt & Söner, Stockholm. Pp. 249. Price, \$12.50.

REVIEWS

Seip, Didrik Arup. *Omstridde spørsmål i norsk språkutvikling*. Fabritius og Sønner Forlag, Oslo, 1952. 123 pp.

REVIEWED BY ERIK WAHLGREN, *University of California, Los Angeles*.

Chiefly intended for interested Norwegian laymen in a country in which every citizen is forced by circumstances to have uncommonly far-reaching views on the use of his mother tongue, Professor Seip's little volume is composed of a preface and seven loosely connected chapters, most of which are revised from previous publication by their author during the period 1947-52. The initial chapter defines the concept *samnorsk*, or the attempted coalition of rural dialect and city speech, and it briefly sketches the changes in import of that term since its coinage in 1909 by Professor Moltke Moe and its injection into active politics in 1920 at the suggestion of Dr. Amund B. Larsen. The final chapter reminisces on earlier stages of Norway's language controversy, and concludes with a salutary exhortation to reason and tolerance. The five intervening essays discuss moot points and seek to eradicate certain prevailing misconceptions about what is, or is not, good Norwegian usage. The five chapters deal respectively with the Oslo dialect; the misuse of *en* where *man* is indicated; the suffix *-else* in Scandinavian; the conflicting conjugations of certain weak verbs; the name forms *Norge* and *Noreg*. The antiquity and influence of Osloese as a specific dialect or dialect amalgam are convincingly portrayed. *Norge* is defended as an authentic form antedating the year 1300 and as legitimately accredited to the majority of Norwegian dialects. By far the longest chapter—approximately 40% of the book—is devoted to a detailed investigation of the suffix *-else* (adapted from the author's contribution to *Fesiskrift til Olaf Broch*, 1947). Though the comparative length and more technical treatment accorded this topic detract from the harmonious effect of the volume as a whole, the persistent reader will be rewarded by Seip's demonstration that *-else*, in which the *-ls-* is the result of metathesis from *-sl-*, is not a borrowed suffix

as commonly asserted, but is quite indigenous to the Scandinavian languages and still productive.

The volume contains a number of misprints, half of which are recorded on an inserted list. Professor Seip's statement (p. 75) that a Norwegian written language was created "for bortimot 1,000 år siden" is obscure. Many runic inscriptions are much older than the tenth century; the recording on vellum of Norway's laws and vernacular literature came later, in the twelfth century. However intended, his statement requires amplification. The book is provided with a table of contents. A list of abbreviations, a list of names, and an index, no one of which is complete, follow at the end of the volume. Professor Seip's scholarship is unquestioned, his style is simple, and his views on controversial issues breathe moderation.

Jorgenson, Theodore. *Norwegian Literature in Medieval and Early Modern Times*. Northfield, St. Olaf College, Norwegian Institute, 1952, PP. 208.

REVIEWED BY RICHARD BECK, *University of North Dakota*.

As pointed out in the preface, the present volume is based upon the corresponding section of the author's *History of Norwegian Literature*, which was published in 1933 and is now out of print. In fact, a comparison of this new edition with the older one reveals, that with the exception of the original introduction, now omitted, and the expanded treatment of Snorri Sturluson, the Icelandic historian, the two books are identical in subject-matter. This being the case, I have little to add to my review of the original edition (*JEGP*, October, 1934, pp. 594-596). Some misprints which marred the first edition have, however, been corrected and certain names are now more correctly spelled.

The concise introductory chapter on the runes is sufficient for its purpose, and the following chapters on the ancient literature contain much information, especially from a descriptive and a biological point of view.

In dealing with the Eddic poems, the skalds and their works, and the various types of sagas, the author is unavoidably discussing literature that is largely Icelandic, a fact which he duly recognizes in some of his subtitles and in his sketches of individ-

ual authors. He persists, however, in claiming the bulk of the Eddic poems for Norway, making much of the discovery of the inscription on the Eggjum rune stone in that connection, and saying: "With the strong possibility of greater age for the majority of the poems, the Norwegian West Country, however, gains increasing support as the home of the majority of the original lays." This sweeping statement with respect to the origin of the Eddic poems is, at best, a questionable one. A concise but authoritative discussion of the whole matter, from various points of view, is to be found in Professor Jón Helgason's "Norges og Islands digtning" (*Nordisk Kultur* VIII B, Litteraturhistoria, Norge og Island), published in 1952, and therefore not, to be sure, available at the time of writing to the author of the volume under review. Nevertheless, Professor Helgason strikes at the very heart of the matter in the conclusion of his discussion of the Eddic poems proper, when he says:

Klare og bestemte svar på spørgsmålet om hvert enkelt digts alder og hjem foreligger ikke og vil aldrig komme til at foreligge. Den eneste absolut sikre kendsgerning er, at digtene er overleverede i islandske håndskrifter, hvorav det vigtigste er fra 13. årh. Bevisbyrden påhviler den, der vil søge deres oprindelse i ældgamle tider eller fjerne egne.

The rewritten chapter on Snorri Sturluson is indeed a very great improvement over the rather perfunctory evaluation of that great historian in the earlier edition. In particular are the external events of Snorri's colorful and often turbulent career now dealt with effectively and in sufficient detail. A greater stress might, however, have been placed on his rare literary artistry, which without belittling his critical faculty, constitutes, all things considered, his greatest glory.

Professor Jorgenson briefly notes that certain scholars believe that Snorri Sturluson wrote *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, adding: "but of this we can express no well-founded opinion." This reviewer has, however, come to the conclusion that Professor Sigurður Nordal has succeeded in proving beyond reasonable doubt Snorri's authorship of that great saga (cf. especially Nordal's edition of *Egils saga* in *Íslensk fornrit II* [1933] and his discussion in "Sagalitteraturen" [*Nordisk Kultur* VIII B, Litteraturhistoria, Norge og Island, 1952]).

The remaining sections of the book, on "The Literature of

the Medieval Church," "Folk Literature," "Humanism and the Reformation," "Holberg and His Age," and "The Growth of National Feeling" are, as I pointed out in my review of the first edition, detailed enough and otherwise adequate in treatment, as well as highly informative for the English-speaking reader; which is also true of the volume as a whole and makes it a valuable contribution to the literature on the subject.

The selected bibliographies have been rewritten and enlarged, and this adds greatly to the reference value of the book. To those bibliographies, in their proper place, I should, however, like to add the following: Bertha Phillpotts: *Edda and Saga* (1931); Halldór Hermannsson: *The Book of the Icelanders* (*Islandica* XX, 1930), *Sæmund Sigfússon and the Oddaverjar* (*Islandica*, XXII, 1932), and *Old Icelandic Literature* (*Islandica*, XXIII, 1933); Jón Jóhannesson: *Gerðir Landnámabókar* (1941); Einar Ól. Sveinsson: *Um Njalu* (1933) and *Á Njálsbúð* (1943).

The index of original and English titles is also a new and valuable feature, but it is somewhat inconsistent and it seems strange at times to find the titles of works in Icelandic given in Norwegian, for instance, in the case of the *Poetic Edda*. There is also a general index, and in appearance the book is attractive.

Lamm, Martin. *Modern Drama*. Translated by Karin Elliott, Philosophical Library, New York, 1953. Pp. xx+359. Price, \$6.00.

REVIEWED BY WALTER JOHNSON, *University of Washington*.

The late Professor Lamm's *Det moderna dramat* (1948) was reviewed briefly in *Scandinavian Studies* (Vol. 22, No. 1, pp. 23-24); its appearance in Karin Elliott's very good English translation should be welcomed by every serious student of modern drama, for it is one of the few really excellent books on the subject. It is *not* as the author pointed out, a comprehensive survey, for "Such a work might easily become nothing more than an annotated bibliography in which the reader loses his way among a multitude of names and titles." It is, instead, Lamm's personal analysis of the development of modern drama in "a series of portraits of dramatists," selected and judged by the man who remains the outstanding authority on Strindberg and who knew modern drama in general exceptionally well.

Aside from chapters on Björnson, Ibsen and Strindberg, there are highly informative chapters on Scribe and Hebbel, Dumas the younger and Augier, the first symbolists, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Gorki, Hauptmann, Austrian drama, Shaw, Galsworthy, Irish drama, O'Neill, Pirandello and the Spanish peasant drama. Lamm knew modern drama beyond the limits of national and linguistic boundaries; he was not as restricted as so many historians of literature are by knowing untranslated literature only at second- or third-hand. A pertinent comparison would be the section on Strindberg in most English or American books on modern drama with Lamm's highly accurate and illuminating chapter on O'Neill.

The four chapters devoted to Scandinavian drama—a short one on Norwegian drama, longer excellent ones on Björnson and Ibsen, and, since the book was originally intended for the Swedish reading public, a fairly short one on Strindberg—are by no means the only sections of the book of interest to students of Scandinavian drama. Lamm knew very well how influential on non-Scandinavian drama both Ibsen and Strindberg had been, so, with few exceptions, the rest of the chapters have much to say about the two great Scandinavians as well.

Even though there are only sixteen pages devoted primarily to Strindberg, Lamm has succeeded in conveying effectively his estimate of Strindberg's achievement and position in modern drama. American students and professors of drama should find the chapter stimulating as well as informative. Lamm is disarmingly frank and modest about his judgments:

It is difficult to determine the relative merits of the great dramatists who wrote at the same time as Strindberg. Let it suffice to say that he is the most modern. Thus, too, he has been regarded by those who followed him. It was no empty compliment that O'Neill paid to Strindberg when he was receiving his Nobel Prize and hailed him as "the greatest dramatic genius of modern times," the man from whom he had received a vision of what drama could be, and an urge to write for the stage (p. 151).

In this presentation of Strindberg as "the boldest and most poetic experimenter in modern drama," Lamm produced one of his finest accounts of Strindberg.

Modern Drama is a "must" for students of the theater and the drama of the last hundred years.

Raaen, Aagot. *Measure of My Days*. Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1953. Pp. v-x, 323. Price, \$3.50.
Christensen, Thomas Peter. *A History of the Danes in Iowa*. Solvang, California: Dansk Folkesamfund, 1952. Pp. 281.

REVIEWED BY SVERRE ARESTAD, *University of Washington*.

Aagot Raaen, a retired school teacher who has turned author, published in 1950 a most delightful account of her not uneventful life on the Dakota prairie, which she called *Grass of the Earth, Immigrant Life in the Dakota Country*. This work only gradually claims the attention of the reader, but after Miss Raaen has taken the reader beyond the period of her childhood and into the period of her youth and maturity, the tale increases considerably in interest. *Grass of the Earth* had the advantage of being utterly unpretentious.

Miss Raaen's first book, which presents the chronology of her family from her childhood until the death of her father and her youngest sister, in a real sense serves as an introduction to *Measure of My Days*. That is not to say that the last book cannot be appreciated without first reading *Grass of the Earth*, but a great deal is added to the value and the interest of the last work by following that procedure. In *Measure of My Days* Miss Raaen again writes in the third person, and she still maintains a pretty critical attitude toward this woman who is her own biographer.

The matters that particularly impress one in *Measure of My Days* are those that point up the manner in which this intelligent woman through careful planning and more than just a little exertion of the will was able to achieve a great deal of satisfaction from living, not least of all by what she was able to do for others. Her real devotion was to teaching, and it would do not harm for many a prospective teacher to become acquainted with her educational philosophy. To ask students to amass facts by rote is utterly useless; they must somehow, either by inspiring them or by cajoling them, be made to rely upon their own powers of reason to determine what is valid for them.

Miss Raaen's two books leave the impression that she herself is a restless soul, forever in quest of the meaning of existence. This unrelenting search is nowhere more apparent than in her style.

The treatment of the material in *A History of the Danes in Iowa* follows pretty largely the same pattern that now, more or less, has become standard practice among historians of the minority groups in America. Although Mr. Christensen's study is comparatively short, as these studies go, he does include all the essential elements of the pattern: the conditions under which the emigrants lived in Denmark, their reasons for leaving, the progressive western settlement (in this instance until Iowa is reached), the settlement of the land, the immigrants' participation in the Civil War, their contribution to the founding of schools, newspapers, churches (with the attendant differences and disputes, which repeat themselves everywhere, it seems), their participation in politics, and their contribution to local government and community betterment through membership on the local boards, whose concern was roads, schools, etc.

Mr. Christensen's purpose was to present in broad outline the achievements of the Danes in Iowa and, within the limitations of space he subscribed for himself, he has done a creditable job of it. What the book lacks in readability (it lacks flair and completeness) and in interpretation is in a measure compensated for by the extremely thorough documentation, there being nine hundred and fifty footnotes to one hundred and ninety-five pages of text. There is a useful bibliography of over a dozen pages, nine appendices, which contain detailed population statistics on the Danes in Iowa, and an Index.

Blixen, Karen. *Kardinalens Tredie Historie*. Et Grafisk Værk af Erik Clemmesen.* Gyldendal, Copenhagen, 1952. Pp. 85. Price, 92 Crowns.

REVIEWED BY BÖRGE GEDSÖ MADSEN, *University of Minnesota*.

Karen Blixen, or Isak Dinesen as she prefers to call herself when she writes in English, is a familiar name to discriminating American readers. *Seven Gothic Tales*, *Out of Africa*, and *Winter's*

* This reviewer is not qualified to judge Erik Clemmesen's illustrations from any technical point of view, but even the layman can see that they are very "beautiful," originally conceived interpretations of Rome and its architecture, both independently and as an accompaniment to the text. In some cases the illustrations serve to punctuate, so to speak, the famous pauses so characteristic of the Blixen narrative—see, e.g., pp. 48-50.

Tales—with their sophisticated blending of the romantic and the classic, of the primitive and the civilized—have firmly established the international fame of their aristocratic author. But it is probably safe to assume that few American readers are acquainted with Karen Blixen's recent work. The obvious reason for this is the fact that thus far her last four works have appeared in Danish only. *Farah*, *Daguerreotypier*, and *Babelles Gæstebud*, which were all read over the Danish radio before publication, are small in format but weighty in content, and *Kardinalens Tredie Historie* is undoubtedly the most important book that Karen Blixen has published since *Winter's Tales*.

It is a story about the conflict between pride and humility, between loneliness and communion. The Scotch noblewoman Lady Flora Gordon traveling in Italy is not uncharitable; on the contrary she gives generously of her great wealth to the poor; but she is too proud to *accept* anything from anyone. Her pure and scrupulously honest way of life has bred in her an unbounded pride, while in her friend and antagonist, Father Jacopo, the same kind of life has engendered an unqualified humility. Father Jacopo, however, is no match for the irreverent Lady Flora who, in their many provocative, brilliantly written discussions about equality and life in general, scoffs merrily at religion and sacred things. After a flippant remark of hers about the rose of Sharon, Father Jacopo rebukes her gently: "Rose of Sharon," he said, "does not the rose particularly bear the stamp of the workshop from which it has issued?" And he goes on to quote from the Song of Songs: "Set me now as a seal on Your heart, as a seal on Your arm. For love is strong like death, terrible like hell." He fears for her salvation. For a while he is tempted to try to make of her a sort of female stylite, but he immediately realizes that the life of an isolated saint would merely affirm her in her pride. From the top of her pillar she would look down contemptuously at the tiny human beings below, or she would turn her gaze calmly upwards, finally convinced of the complete emptiness of the heavens: "Terrible, terrible would the hermit with the gay, cruel smile be up there!"

Father Jacopo does not give up hope, however, and prays that in Rome, in the Holy City itself, she may yet find an op-

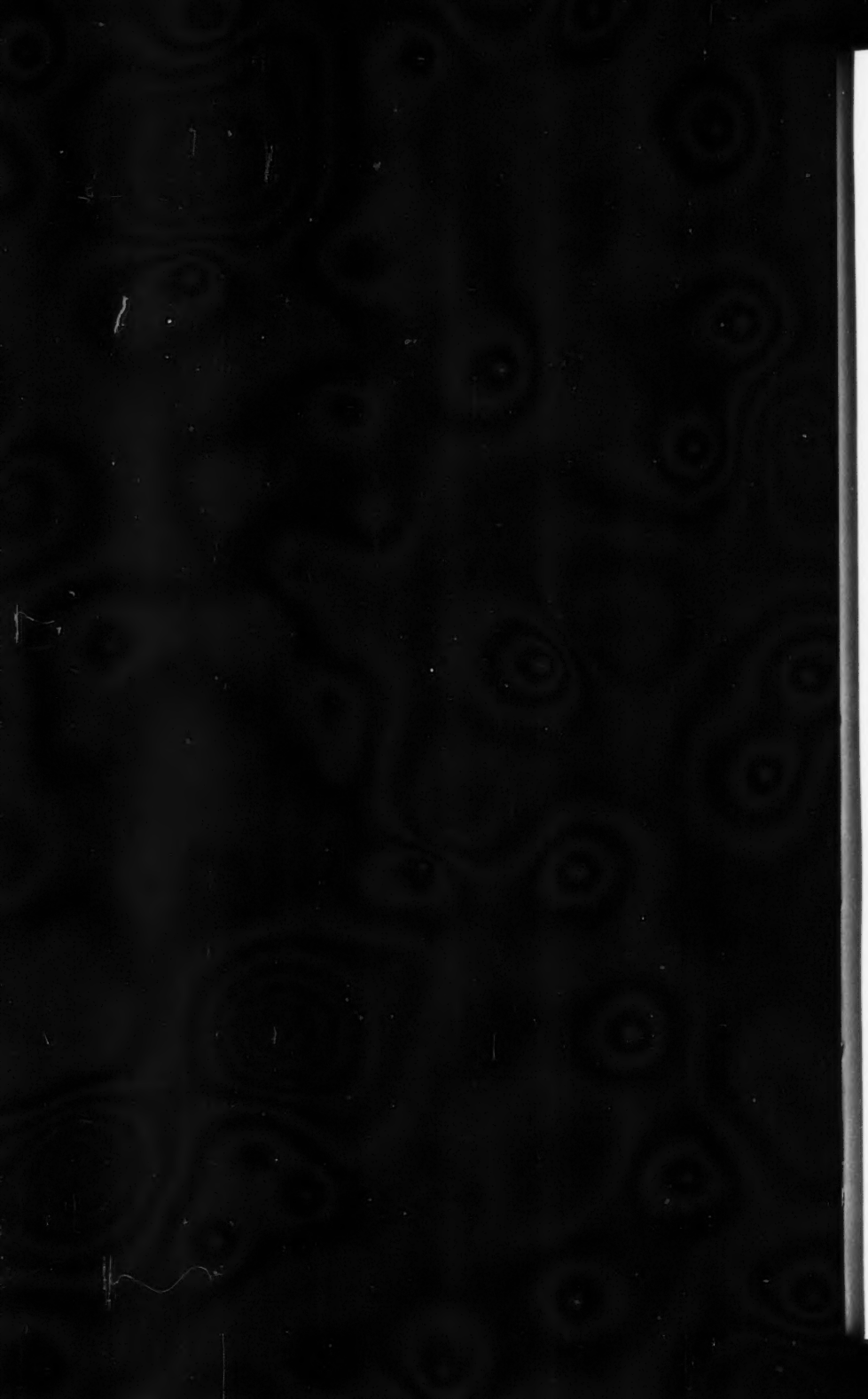
ponent worthy of her, to whom she may yield without disgrace. And she does, in the cathedral of St. Peter. One day, as she later relates to a friend, she is standing in the cathedral, watching the statue of St. Peter. A young handsome man of the people enters and kisses the foot of the statute. Without knowing why, almost in spite of herself, Lady Flora is urged by something within her to press her lips to the place, still moist and warm, which the young man had touched. A few weeks later a sore appears on her lip, and her physician immediately diagnoses the disease and tells her the name of it. "I was not ignorant," she observes, "I knew the name. As I stood before the mirror, I thought of Father Jacopo. What, I reflected, does this look like? Like a rose?—Or like a seal?"

Thus Lady Flora is redeemed of her isolation and brought closer to the people by a miracle, nothing less. But she is not humbled. Karen Blixen has not turned "democratic" all of a sudden. The august, dignified figure of Peter himself ("who has the only honest face in Rome") is required to effect the *rap-prochement*. Besides, all the sophisticated aristocratic qualities of her earlier works are found in this tale also, the Voltairean wit, the insistence on the virtues of grace, dignity, and courage.

Yet when one compares *Kardinalens Tredie Historie* with *Seven Gothic Tales*, *Out of Africa*, and *Winter's Tales*, one is perhaps justified in finding in this latest tale of the Lady of Rungstedlund intimations of a greater cordiality, of greater human warmth, *af større Elskværdighed*, as we should say in Danish.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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